

February 23, 2022

**Testimony Regarding HB 5037 - Dental Reimbursement Rates**  
Lindsey Henry Tunxis Community College Dental Hygiene Class of 2022

Senators Kushner, Cicarella, Osten, Hartley, and Miner, Representatives Abercrombie, Betts, Walker, Dathan, Nolan, and France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Lindsey Henry and I am a registered voter in Granby, CT.

I am testifying in my role as being a soon-to-be dental hygienist.

The proposed increased reimbursement rates for adults seeking dental treatment on HUSKY are greatly appreciated, especially the proposed endodontic rate matching the children's rate. However, we are concerned the 25% increase is too small to increase provider participation. **In order to increase provider participation in Medicaid, adult dental reimbursement rates need to be increased to parity with the child rates.**

Prior to beginning my dental hygiene journey, I worked in a dental office as a receptionist. I remember many conversations with patients pleading to be seen for treatment or the horror stories from people about how hard it is to find an office to perform much needed dental work. It was very sad to have the conversations with people in need that our office was not able to see them due to the reimbursement rates for HUSKY being so much less than the actual cost of the procedure. Why is it that the cost of these procedures can continue to increase, but the coverage for the adults on HUSKY has remained the same for the past 14 years?

Now that I have been working in a public health setting for the past year in school, I have seen and heard from patients that are in such need for dental care but cannot afford the services or it will just take too long to be seen so they end up just extracting their teeth. I will soon be in the work force as a registered dental hygienist and would love to see a change in accessibility for these patients so that we can help them improve their overall well-being with access to dental care. I hope that dental care will be taken more seriously because, the mouth is truly the window to the rest of the body and are directly related to each other.

I urge you to increase the adult Medicaid reimbursement rates to bring them to parity with the child Medicaid rates. This will allow family dental practices to accept Medicaid patients of all ages, expanding the network and improving access to care.

We look forward to continuing this conversation about how we can best provide comprehensive dental care to Connecticut's low-income residents. Thank you for your time and for supporting access to care in Connecticut.

Lindsey Henry  
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Facts & reasons you can use in your testimony:

- 2 out of 3 adults on HUSKY do not access dental care, many because they cannot find a dentist.
- Increased Medicaid rates for all services can lead to an expanded network and reduce geographic barriers to care for the adults of Connecticut .
- Access to comprehensive adult services has potential to reduce financial burden for patients and emergency rooms having to see patients experiencing dental-related pain.
- The average wait time for a root canal is 4 months. That is too long to live in pain and is usually too long for a root canal to be successful.
- According to public health dentists, 8 out of 10 adults on HUSKY who need a root canal end up getting an extraction because they cannot find a specialist to treat them.
- The dental Medicaid rates have not been increased in 14 years.
- The adult dental Medicaid rates are so low, dentists receive 37 cents on the dollar compared to average insurance.
- The pandemic related surge in personal protective equipment (PPE) costs has impacted providers' ability to see Medicaid patients. The cost of PPE is up to \$16 per patient per visit.
- The rate difference between adults and children leads to confusion among families about which dentists are in the Medicaid network for children vs the network for adults.
- There are only 300 or so practices that will see adults, compared to about 700 who will see children. There are more adults than children on HUSKY.

**Instructions:**

Submit your written testimony by emailing a PDF attachment to [APPTestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:APPTestimony@cga.ct.gov) by Tuesday, February 22 at 3pm.

If you want to provide spoken/oral testimony, register using the [On-line Testimony Registration Form](#) by Tuesday, February 22 at 3pm.

Reach out to [pareesa@ctoralhealth.org](mailto:pareesa@ctoralhealth.org) with any questions or assistance preparing your testimony, signing up to testify, etc.

*Thank you for supporting oral health!*

**More Information:**

\*APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022

The Appropriations Committee will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at 2:00 P.M. via Zoom. The public hearing can be viewed via YouTube Live. In addition, the public hearing may be recorded and broadcast live on CT-N.com.

Individuals who wish to testify via Zoom must register using the [On-line Testimony Registration Form](#). Registration will close on Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 3:00 P.M. Speaker order of approved registrants will be posted on the Appropriations Committee website on Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 6:00 P.M. under Public Hearing Testimony.

If you do not have internet access, you may provide testimony via telephone. To register to testify by phone, call the Phone Registrant Line at (860) 240-0033 to leave your contact information.

Please email written testimony in Word or PDF format (PDF is strongly preferred) to [APPtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:APPtestimony@cga.ct.gov).

The Committee requests that testimony be limited to matters related to the items on the Agenda. Speakers will be limited to three minutes of testimony. The Committee encourages witnesses to submit a written statement and to condense oral testimony to a summary of that statement. All public hearing testimony, written and spoken, is public information. As such, it will be made available on the CGA website and indexed by internet search engines.